

(12) **UK Patent Application** (19) **GB** (11) **2 234 383** (13) **A**
 (43) Date of A publication 30.01.1991

(21) Application No 9015971.6

(22) Date of filing 20.07.1990

(30) Priority data

(31) 8917251

(32) 28.07.1989

(33) GB

(71) Applicant

Keith Patrick Williams
 9 Murray Avenue, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3DG,
 United Kingdom

(72) Inventor

Keith Patrick Williams

(74) Agent and/or Address for Service

Graham Jones & Company
 77 Beaconsfield Road, Blackheath, London,
 SE3 7LG, United Kingdom

(51) INT CL⁸

G09F 19/00

(52) UK CL (Edition K)

G5C CKA

(56) Documents cited

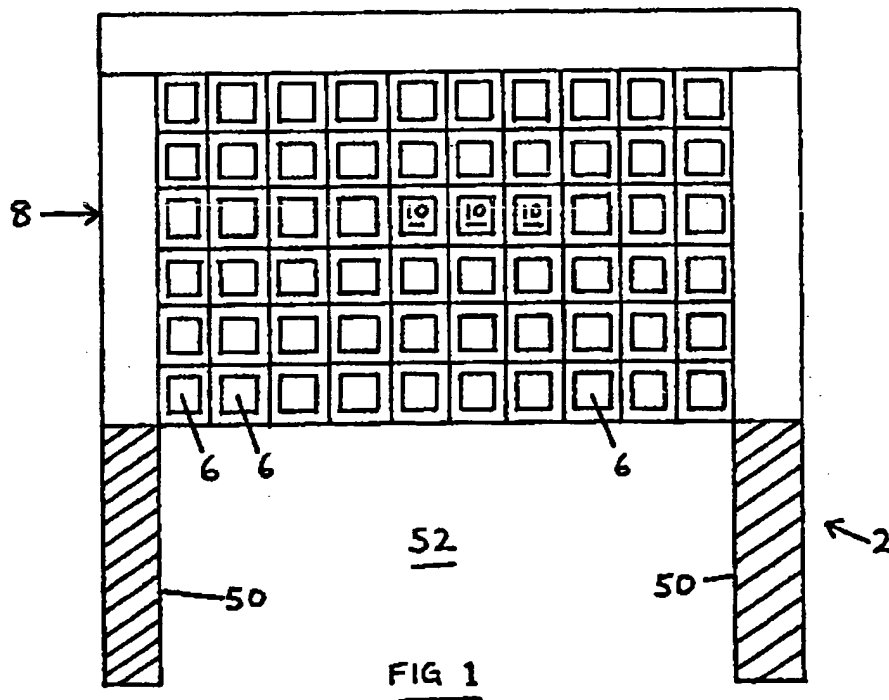
GB 0401090 A GB 0221360 A

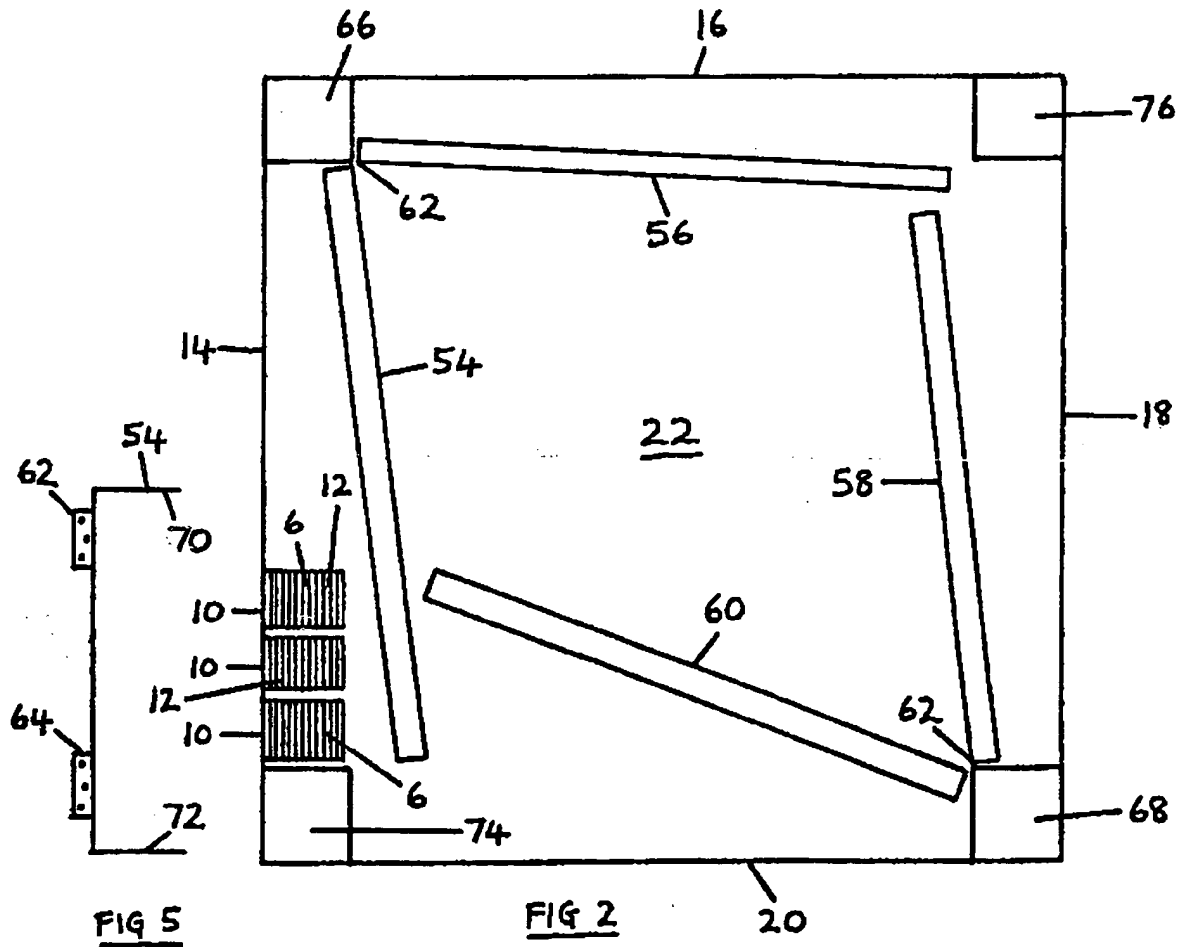
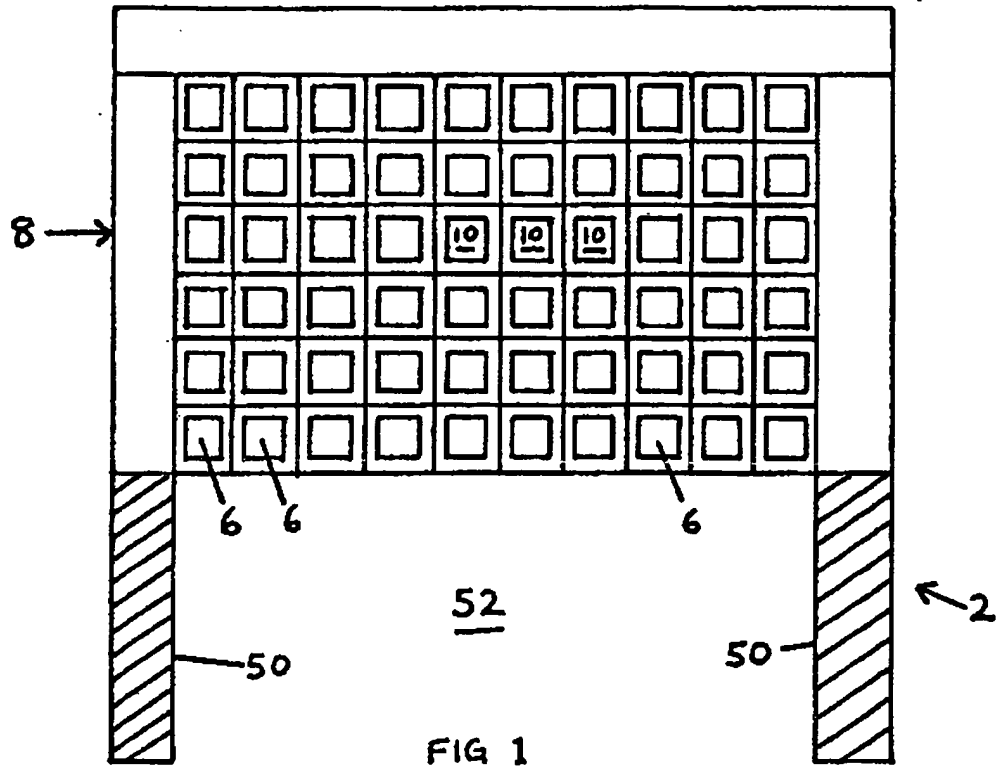
(58) Field of search

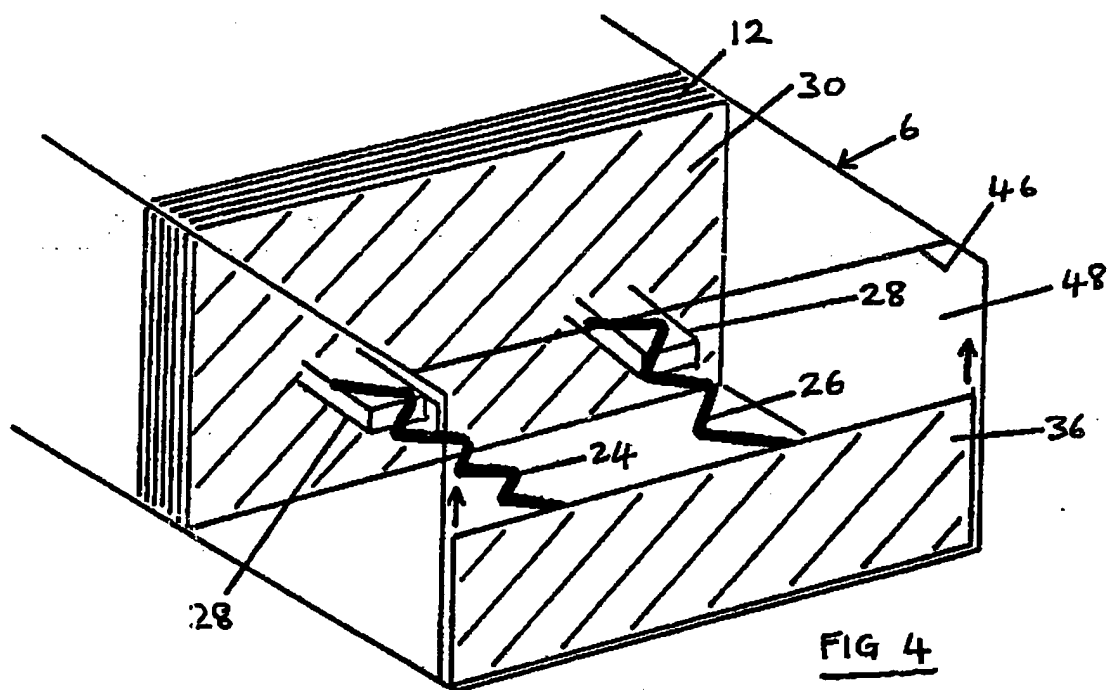
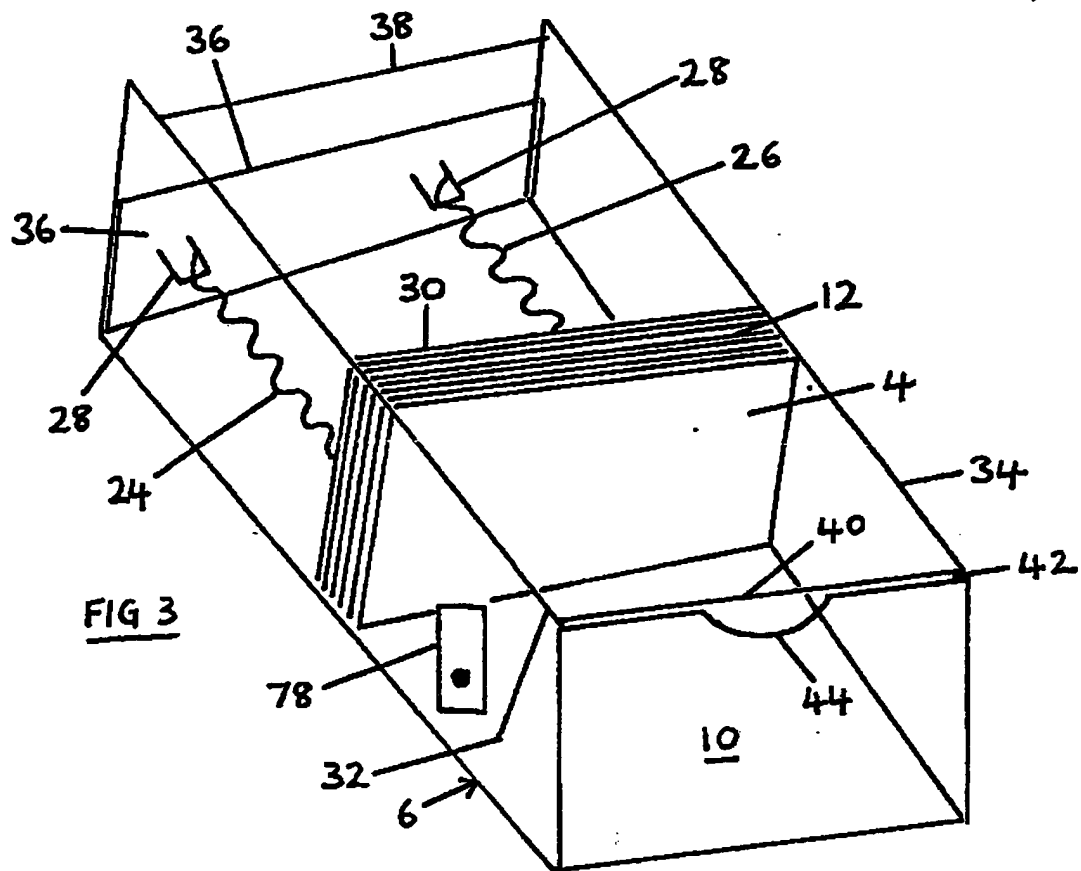
UK CL (Edition K) B8P PG3D, G5C CAX CBH CBL
 CBM CKA
 INT CL⁸ G09F

(54) A display cabinet for business cards

(57) A display cabinet for displaying and dispensing business cards comprises a plurality of containers 6 and a frame 8 for holding them, the containers 6 each having a transparent front face 10 and receiving a stack (12 Figure 2) of the business cards which are stacked vertically whereby the front business card in each stack of the business cards is viewable through the transparent front face. Each container includes biasing means for biasing the stack of cards towards the transparent front face. This arrangement is such that the business cards are only removable from the containers one at a time.







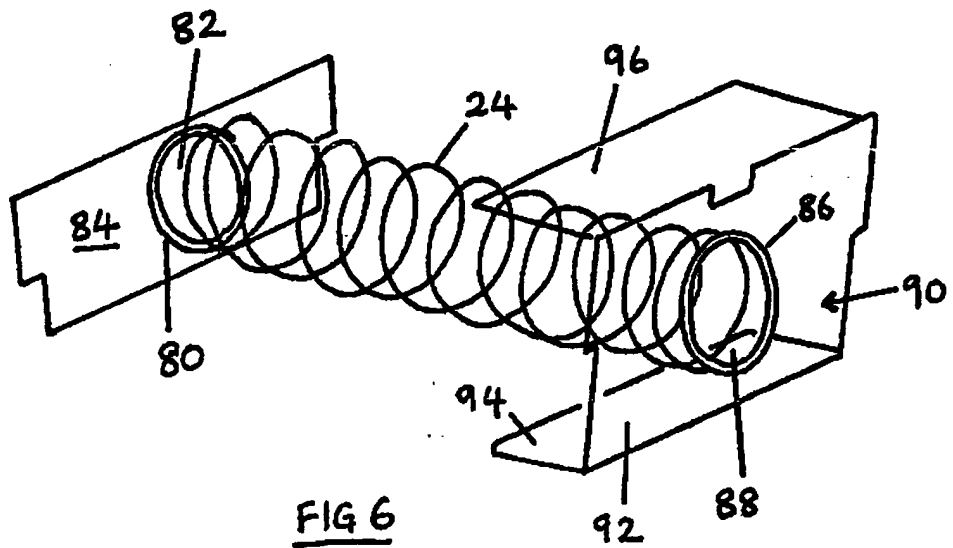


FIG 6

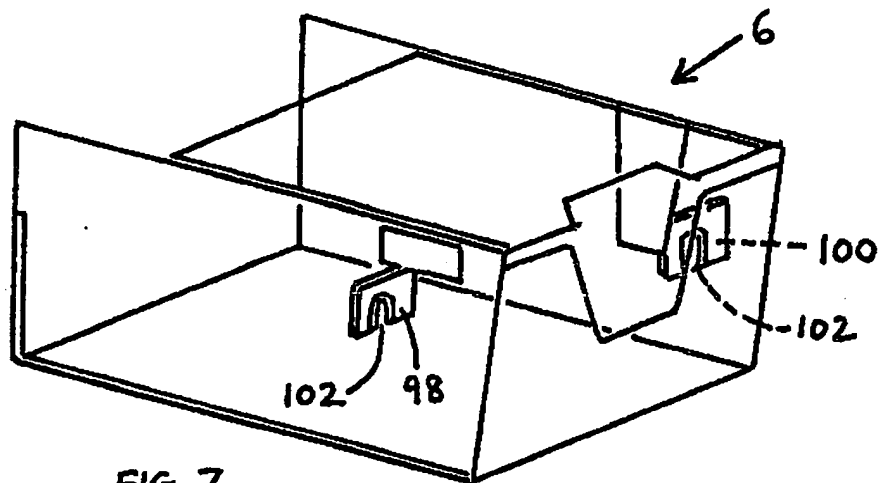


FIG 7

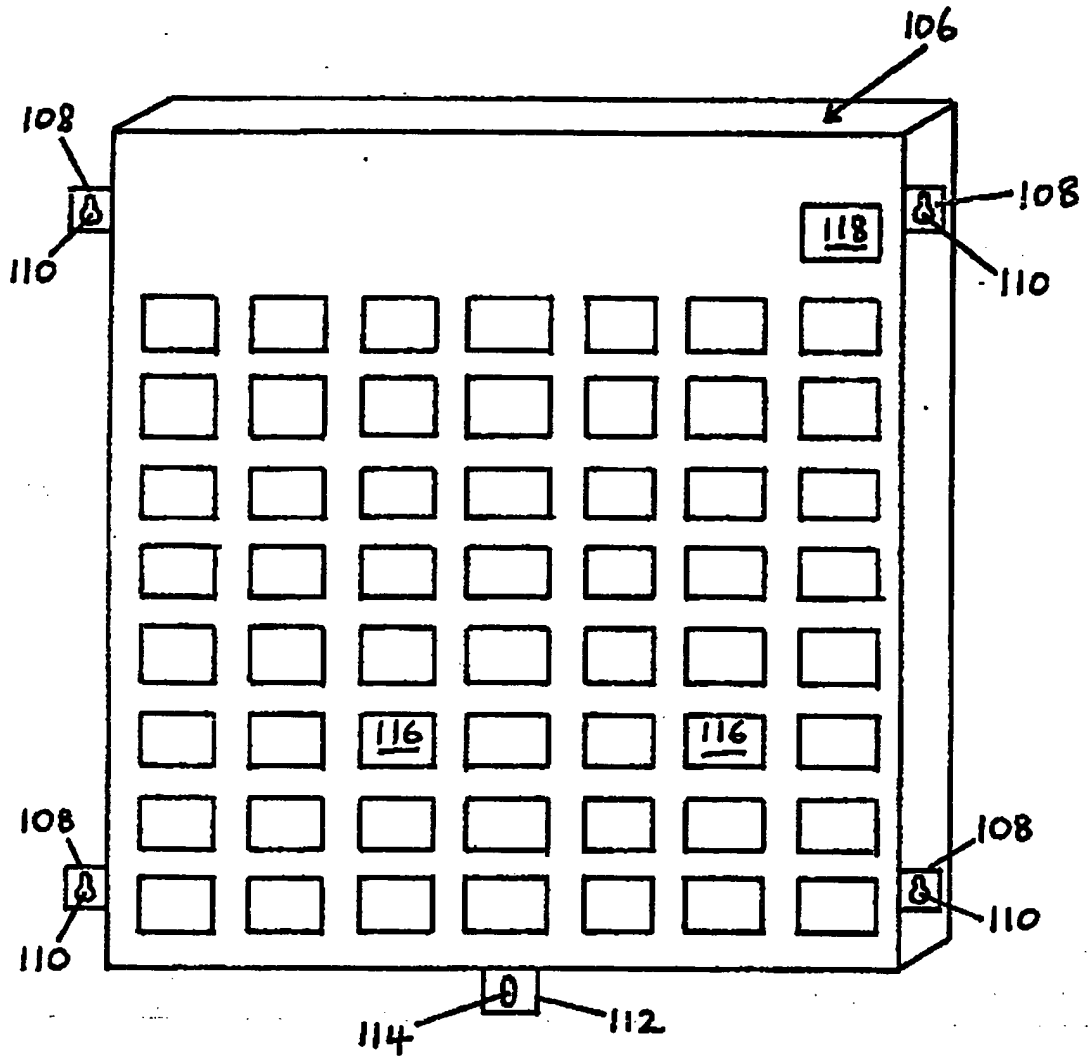


FIG 8

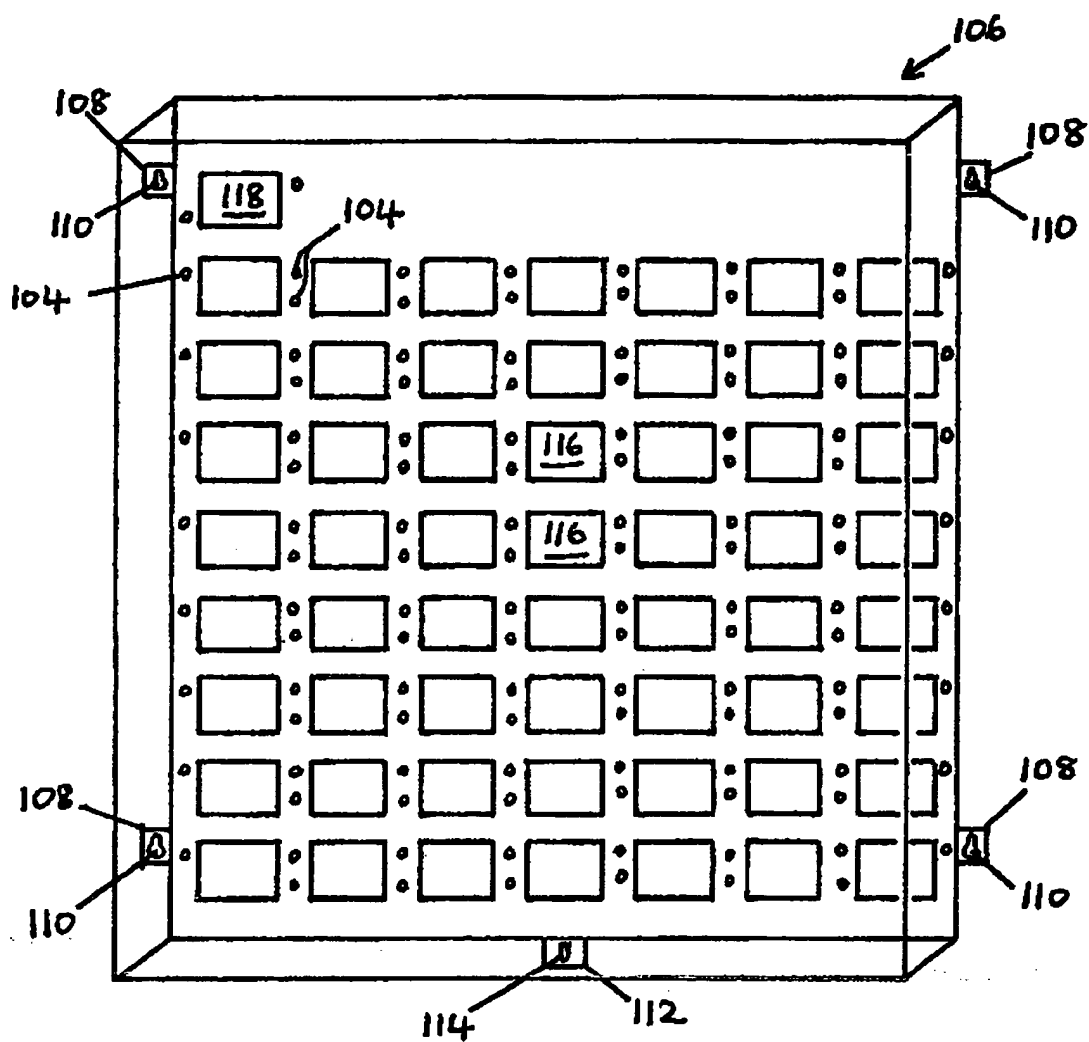


FIG 9

A DISPLAY CABINET FOR DISPLAYING AND DISPENSING
BUSINESS CARDS

This invention relates to a display cabinet for displaying and dispensing business cards.

Advertising forms an essential part of substantially all businesses, from large companies down to single individuals. The advertising may take various forms and usually depends upon the amount of money that the business has available for advertising purposes. Thus, for example, large companies may advertise on television and in national newspapers, whereas individuals may advertise in local newspapers and by means of leaflets delivered to homes. These forms of advertising have varying degrees of success. Irrespective of how much advertising is done, there is always a need for further advertising and the present invention is based on the realisation that the majority of people in business have a business card. This business card is invariably only given to persons who have already been introduced to the business and business cards tend to stay hidden in wallets or office desk drawers until such time as the owner of a business card feels the need to present one to a person.

It is an aim of the present invention to enable business cards to be used for advertising purposes and thus to increase the use which can be made of business cards for the benefit of businesses.

5 Accordingly, this invention provides a display cabinet for displaying and dispensing business cards, which display cabinet comprises a plurality of containers, and a frame for holding the containers, the containers being such that each container has a transparent front
10 face and is for receiving a stack of business cards, the containers being positioned with the transparent front faces of the containers facing outwardly so that during use of the display cabinet a business card in each one of the containers is viewable through the transparent
15 front face for display purposes, the containers also being such that the business cards in the containers are only removable from the containers one at a time so that persons interested in having a business card are able to obtain the business card but in a manner which deters the
20 persons from taking too many business cards at once, the containers being constructed for receiving the stacks of business cards such that the business cards are disposed vertically whereby the front business card in each stack of the business cards is viewable through the
25 transparent front face, and the containers each being such

as to include biasing means for biasing the stack of business cards towards the transparent front face.

The display cabinet of the present invention may be positioned in public areas and preferably in public areas where security exists. Thus, for example, the display cabinet may be positioned in airports, railway stations, underground stations and shopping precincts. General members of the public will thus be able to see the display cabinets and see the various business cards of various businesses. If a person should be interested in any one particular business, then that person may obtain one of the business cards. By having the business cards dispensable one at a time, premature running out of the business cards by persons taking two or more at once is reduced and, in addition, vandalism such as taking stacks of the cards and throwing them about is also reduced. The business cards may be displayed by all types of businesses, large and small, and the businesses may be involved in manufacture and/or selling, or in service industries. Generally, the business cards may advertise any form of business in any desired manner.

Preferably, the containers are such that the business cards are removably adjacent the transparent front face and in a plane parallel to the transparent front face.

The display cabinet may be wall mounted or free standing.

When the display cabinet is free standing, it may have four sides with the containers being positioned along the four sides, the display cabinet then being square or rectangular in plan. Other constructions may be employed such that, for example, the containers may be positioned along two or three sides of a display cabinet, in which case the display cabinet may be triangular in plan. Other shapes for the display cabinet may be employed but these shapes are preferably such as to enclose an area so that persons cannot normally gain access to the back of the containers and damage the containers.

Usually, the containers will be transparent on all faces. The containers may then simply be made from a transparent plastics material.

The containers may be in the form of pull-out drawers. The pull-out drawers facilitate replenishing the containers with more of the business cards, or with different business cards.

The frame may have a plurality of apertures for receiving the containers. Usually, there will be one aperture for each container but, if desired, one aperture may receive two or more containers.

5 Preferably, the containers are held only in an upper part of the frame. The frame may then have support legs so that a maintenance person can get underneath the upper part of the frame in order to gain access to the rear of the containers for the purpose
10 of refilling them with business cards or for the purpose of inserting different business cards.

 Preferably, the rear of the containers on each side of the frame are closed by a lockable closure door, there being a single one of the lockable closure doors
15 for all the containers on each side.

 The biasing means may comprise at least one spring. The biasing means may include a plate member for being pushed by the or each spring against the stack of cards.

20 It will be apparent that the display cabinet of the present invention may be simple to construct and also simple to fill with the business cards. The display cabinet need not occupy much space since it can form a compact self-contained unit which, nevertheless, is able

to display and dispense a large number of different business cards. The display cabinet is ideally suited for use in public areas and, because the display stand need only occupy a relatively small amount of wall or floor space, rental of the required space in the public areas will be kept to a minimum. This rental can easily be recouped with an appropriate business profit by making an appropriate charge to businesses wishing to display their business cards. Because the display cabinet is able to display so many different business cards, the charge to a business can be kept to the minimum and thus businesses will be encouraged to use the display cabinet in order to increase their advertising capability.

An embodiment of the invention will now be described solely by way of example and with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a front view of a display cabinet;

Figure 2 is a top plan view of part of the display cabinet shown in Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a perspective view showing the front of a container for use in the display cabinet;

Figure 4 is a perspective view showing part of the rear of the container shown in Figure 3;

Figure 5 is a top plan view on a reduced scale of a locking closure door for use in closing the rear of the containers used in the display cabinet;

Figure 6 is a perspective view illustrating an alternative biasing mechanism to that shown in Figures 3 and 4;

5 Figure 7 shows an alternative container to that shown in Figures 3 and 4;

Figure 8 is a front view of an alternative display cabinet; and

Figure 9 is a rear view of the display cabinet shown in Figure 8.

10 Referring to Figures 1 to 5, there is shown a display cabinet in the form of a display stand 2 for displaying and dispensing business cards 4. The display stand 2 comprises a plurality of containers 6, and a frame 8 for holding the containers 6 and for supporting
15 the display stand 2 on the ground.

The containers 6 are such that each container 6 has a transparent front face 10 and is for receiving a stack 12 of the business cards 4.

5 The display stand 2 is such that the containers 6 are positioned along four sides 14, 16, 18, 20 of the display stand 2, with the four sides 14, 16, 18, 20 defining a closed square area 22. The transparent front face 10 of each container 6 faces outwardly as shown so that during use of the display stand 2, a business card 4 in each one of the containers 6 is viewable through the transparent front face 10 for display purposes.

10 The container 6 are also such that the business cards 4 in the containers 6 are only removable from the container 6 one at a time. Thus persons interested in having a business card 4 are able to obtain the business card 4 but in a manner which deters the persons from taking too many of the business cards 4 at once. This

stops persons being greedy and taking too many of the business cards at once, thereby possibly wasting the business cards and/or prematurely emptying the container. Vandals may also be prevented from taking quantities of the business cards and just throwing them around.

As can be seen from Figures 3 and 4, the containers 6 are constructed for receiving the stacks 12 of the business cards 4 such that the business cards 4 are disposed vertically. Thus the front business card 4 in each stack 12 of the business cards 4 is viewable through the transparent front face 10. Also as shown in Figures 3 and 4, the containers 6 each include biasing means in the form of a pair of springs 24, 26 which terminate in members 28 which are connected to a back plate 30. The back plate 30 presses on the rearmost business card 4 and thus pushes the stack 12 of business cards 4 towards the transparent front face 10.

As can best be seen from Figure 3, the entire container 6 is made to be transparent and it is made from a transparent plastics material. The container 6 has side faces 32, 34, a rear face 36 and a top face 38. The top face 38 has a front end 40 which terminates just short of the transparent front face 10 to define a narrow gap 42

through which the foremost business card 4 can be withdrawn. The business cards 4 can thus only be withdrawn one at a time and they are withdrawn in a plane parallel to the transparent front face 10. The transparent front face 10 as shown in Figure 3 has a recessed portion 44 for facilitating gripping of the business card 4 and sliding it upwardly through the gap 42.

As can be seen from Figures 3 and 4, the rear face 36 is lower than the height of the side faces 32, 34. Also, the top face 38 has a rear end 46 which terminates short of the vertical plane containing the rear face 36. There is thus formed a relatively large gap 48 through which the business cards 4 can be inserted. If desired, the top face 38 may be a removable top face which can be clipped in position. This may facilitate re-loading of the containers 6.

The containers 6 are each held in an aperture in the frame 8 as will be appreciated from Figure 1. The containers can then be pulled rearwardly out of the apertures for refilling purposes, the containers 6 being formed as pull-out drawers or boxes. The containers 6 are held only in an upper part of the frame 8 as shown in Figure 1. The lower part of the frame 8 has support legs 50. There is thus a space 52 between the ground and the

bottom row of containers 6 which enable a person to bend underneath the containers 6 and thus gain access to the square area 22.

Referring to Figure 2, it will be seen that the display stand 2 includes four lockable closure doors 54, 55, 58, 60. One closure door 54 is shown schematically in Figure 5 and it will be seen that the closure door 54 (and also the other closure doors 56, 58, 60) are hinged about hinges 62, 64. The hinges 62, 64 are connected to two diagonally opposite frame members 66, 68. Thus each frame member 66, 68 supports two of the closure doors as shown. In their closed position, the closure doors fit over the containers 6 by means of top and bottom flanges 70, 72 respectively. Two locks (not shown) are employed and these are employed adjacent the frame members 74, 76. Thus one lock is able to lock together the closure doors 54 and 60, whilst the other lock is able to lock together the closure doors 56 and 58. In the locked position, the rear of the containers 6 are covered and thus locked closed to prevent vandals getting into the square area 24 and then trying to vandalise the containers 6 from the rear.

In Figures 6 and 7, similar parts as in Figures 3 and 4 have been given the same reference numerals and their precise construction and operation will not again

be given. As can be seen from Figure 6, only one spring 24 is employed. The spring 24 locates on a boss 80 surrounding an aperture 82 in a back plate 84. The other end of the spring 24 locates over a boss 86 surrounding an aperture 88 in a front member 90. The front member 90 has a front plate 92, a bottom plate 94 and a top plate 96.

When the front member 90 is located in the container 6 shown in Figure 7, the front plate 92, the bottom plate 94 and the top plate 96 help to stop the entire front member 90 pivoting from side to side as people try and obtain one of the business cards 4. Thus the front member 90 helps to avoid the stack of business cards being wedged in at an angle or otherwise unduly disturbed as the business cards 4 are taken by appropriate persons.

As can be seen from Figure 7, the container 6 has a pair of locating lugs 98, 100. Each locating lug 98, 100 has a slot 102 in it and this slot fits over a stud of the type shown as studs 104 in Figure 9. It will be noticed that the locating lugs 98, 100 are offset from each other and it will similarly be noted that the lugs in Figure 9 are such that there are two outer rows of single studs 104 and then there are six inner rows of pairs of studs 104. In each pair of studs 104, the bottom stud is for receiving the locating lug 100 of a container 6

located to the left of the pair of studs 104, whilst the uppermost stud in the pair of studs is for receiving the lug 98 on containers positioned to the right of the pair of studs 104.

5 Referring now specifically to Figures 8 and 9, similar parts as in previous Figures have been given the same reference numbers and their precise construction and operation will not again be given. In Figures 8 and 9, there is shown a display cabinet in the form of
10 a wall mounted display cabinet 106. The display cabinet 106 is provided with fixing lugs 108 for enabling the cabinet 106 to be mounted on a wall (not shown). Each lug 108 is provided with a keyhole slot 110 for assisting in locating the cabinet 106 on a screw
15 or bolt (not shown).

 A locking lug 112 is provided for locking the front of the cabinet 106 as shown in Figure 8 in a closed position during normal use of the cabinet 106. The locking lug 112 is provided with an aperture 114 for
20 receiving part of a locking device (not shown).

 Figures 8 and 9 show apertures 116 for receiving the containers 6. It will be noticed from Figures 8 and 9 that there is one aperture 118 which is located in the top right hand corner of the cabinet 106 as viewed in Figure 8.

This aperture 118 is for receiving a container 6 with cards appropriate for the manufacturer or the sales organisation responsible for manufacturing or selling the cabinet 106. Thus persons interested in obtaining further details of the cabinet 106 can obtain an appropriate business card.

It is to be appreciated that the embodiments of the invention described above with reference to the accompanying drawings have been given by way of example only and that modifications may be effected. Thus, for example, the container 6 could extend along three sides of a display stand 2 in which case the display stand 2 would be triangular in plan. The container 6 may be provided with a pair of flanges 78 one on either side of each of the containers 6, for enabling the container 6 to be screwed to the frame for retention purposes. More or less containers 6 than illustrated may be employed. The display stand 2 may be produced to be fixed in position or to be movable.

CLAIMS

1. A display cabinet for displaying and dispensing business cards, which display cabinet comprises a plurality of containers, and a frame for holding the containers, the containers being such that each container has a transparent front face and is for receiving a stack of business cards, the containers being positioned with the transparent front faces of the containers facing outwardly so that during use of the display cabinet a business card in each one of the containers is viewable through the transparent front face for display purposes, the containers also being such that the business cards in the containers are only removable from the containers one at a time so that persons interested in having a business card are able to obtain the business card but in a manner which deters the person from taking too many business cards at once, the containers being constructed for receiving the stacks of business cards such that the business cards are disposed vertically whereby the front business card in each stack of the business cards is viewable through the transparent front face, and the containers each being such as to include biasing means for biasing the stack of business cards towards the transparent front face.

2. A display cabinet according to claim 1 in which the containers are such that the business cards are removable adjacent the transparent front face and in a plane parallel to the transparent front face.

5 3. A display cabinet according to claim 1 or claim 2 and which is wall mounted.

4. A display cabinet according to claim 1 or claim 2 and which is free standing.

10 5. A display cabinet according to claim 4 in which the containers are positioned along four sides, the display cabinet then being square or rectangular in plan.

6. A display cabinet according to any one of the preceding claims in which the containers are transparent on all faces.

15 7. A display cabinet according to any one of the preceding claims in which the containers are in the form of pull-out drawers.

8. A display cabinet according to any one of the preceding claims in which the frame has a plurality of apertures for receiving the containers.

5 9. A display cabinet according to any one of the preceding claims in which the rear of the containers on each side of the frame are closed by a lockable closure door, there being a single one of the lockable closure doors for all of the containers on each side.

10 10. A display cabinet according to any one of the preceding claims in which the biasing means comprises at least one spring.

11. A display cabinet according to claim 10 in which the biasing means includes a plate member for being pushed by the or each spring against the stack of cards.

15 12. A display cabinet substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.